

**Town of Erie  
2005  
Open Space and Trails Advisory Board  
Trail Connectivity Report**



**Presented to:**

**Town of Erie  
Board of Trustees and Mayor Andrew Moore  
April 10, 2005**

***Prepared by the Town of Erie Open Space and Trails Advisory Board***

To: Mayor Andrew Moore, Mayor Pro Tem Harry Pink  
Town of Erie Board of Trustees - Greg McCallum, Tom Van Lone, David Callahan, Glenn Massarotti, Beth Klein  
CC: Mike Acimovic – Town Administrator, Deb Pearson  
From: Erie Open Space and Trails Advisory Board

## **RE: Town of Erie Trail Connectivity Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The Open Space and Trails Advisory Board (OSTAB) was recently tasked by Mayor Andrew Moore to develop and prioritize a list of potential trail connections and open space “sites.” The following document represents the recommendations of OSTAB regarding initial trail construction and connectivity within the town of Erie.

### **Process**

Preliminary discussion between OSTAB members at the February 14<sup>th</sup>, monthly meeting determined that within the confines of this project, trails within incorporated Erie would be the primary focus. Please note that OSTAB unanimously concludes that Open Space acquisitions are equally important, if not more so, to secure the land on which to preserve Erie’s character, natural resources, and construct trails. It is with utmost urgency that OSTAB recommends a complete inventory of current and future land acquisition be completed by the Town of Erie.

However, OSTAB understands that Erie’s electorate would like a physical project under construction within the near future (approx. one year); therefore, trail connectivity is an important short-term priority.

### **The Steps below were used to initiate and conclude the Trail Connectivity Prioritization Study:**

1. Identify trail categories and physical features that protect pedestrians and provide ease of travel.

- Neighborhood to Neighborhood
- Neighborhoods to School
- Neighborhoods to Old Town
- Neighborhoods to Commercial Center
- Neighborhoods to Community Services
- Unsafe roadways – County Line Road, Isabelle Road, County Road 8

2. Identify citizen concentrated areas that would benefit from trail connections. Using the Town of Erie Open Space and Trails Map provided by Staff, colored indicators were used to identify the following:

- Schools (violet)
- Neighborhoods (orange)
- Commercial Areas (red)
- Community Services/Town Amenities (yellow)

\*\*Please note this map data has been further enhanced by OSTAB member Jon Dauzvardis for use as a planning tool and is attached for visual reference. This map compiles information from various sources including:

- Town of Erie Open Space, Parks and Trails Map, dated 2002.
- Parks, Recreation, Trail and Open Space Master Plan, December, dated 1997.
- Boulder County Open Space Geographic Information System Data, dated 2001.
- Town Of Erie Comprehensive Development Plan Map -1999 with 2001 Amendments.
- Terra Server aerial photography for Boulder and Weld Counties, dated ~ 2000.
- USGS 7.5' quadrangle maps for Erie and Fredrick, Colorado.

3. Identify specific connections (in Priority Sequence)

Initial discussion resulted in a preliminary list of community trail connections. OSTAB met on February 28<sup>th</sup> to finalize this list and prioritize them. Table 1 exhibits those trails determined to be of highest priority or First Tier Trail Connections. First Tier trail connections are indicated as a red line with a priority number on the attached Figure 1, First Tier Trails Plan.

During the process, a second tier of significant trail connections was established as outlined in Table 2. This list includes both local and regional trails that may logically follow after first tier trails are implemented. Second Tier Trail Connections are indicated as a pink line on the attached Figure 2, Secondary Tier Trails Plan. It should be noted, all proposed trails are conceptual and a closer analysis of site conditions, environmental and cultural resources and existing land ownership should be conducted prior to establishing final locations.

**TABLE 1**  
**FIRST TIER TRAIL CONNECTION PRIORITIES (IN ORDER):**

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1. **Evensong to Erie Elementary (~7,930 LF):** Connect existing trails with new trails from Evensong/Baxter Farms to Candle Light/Meadow Sweet Farms to Country Meadows/Country Fields/Sunwest to the Union Pacific Rail Line and Erie Elementary/Erie Middle School.
2. **Kenosha Farms to Erie Elementary (~5,960 LF):** Develop a new trail from Kenosha Farms to Erie Village to future Osprey Development to Erie Elementary/Erie Middle School.
3. **Orchard Glen to Erie Elementary (~5,385 LF):** Connect existing trails with new trails from Orchard Glen to Canyon Creek to Country Meadows/Country Fields to the Union Pacific Rail Line and Erie Elementary/Erie Middle School.
4. **Creek Side to Coal Creek Park via Union Pacific Rail Line (7,460 LF):** Establish a trail along Union Pacific Rail line from Creek Side Development to Coal Creek Park. Ideally, this trail would eventually tie in to the back side (west) of the elementary and middle school.
5. **Coal Creek Park to Boulder Creek via Coal Creek (~12,500 LF):** A Coal Creek trail starting at Coal Creek Park, bridging to the east side of Coal Creek, then running northwest along the creek past Erie Village to the Kenosha Gravel Pits and Boulder Creek (Proposed St. Vrain Legacy Trail System).
6. **Vista Pointe to Highway 7 via Coal Creek (~10,430 LF):** A Coal Creek trail from the Vista Pointe trail system south along the entire distance of Coal Creek to Highway 7. (Proposed Boulder County trail system connection).
7. **Old Town to Erie High School (~9,025 LF):** Develop a new trail from Old Town/Coal Creek Park through the Whale property and Tall Grass leading up to the new High school (Proposed St. Vrain Legacy Trail System).

These first tier trail priorities were formulated on the basis of providing:

- Current Erie residents with a functional, safe and recreational connection to schools, community services, commercial centers, and neighborhoods.
- Current and future residents with a connection to a central recreation and natural resource amenity via Coal Creek.
- Trail connections that connect with and utilize existing trail infrastructure.
- Trail alternatives that are offset or detached from roads or roadside sidewalks, and therefore provide a safe, pedestrian friendly experience.
- Regional and local trails that connect to broader regional networks proposed by other entities such as Boulder County, Lafayette and the St. Vrain Legacy program.

**TABLE 2**  
**SECOND TIER TRAIL CONNECTION PRIORITIES:**

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- Arapahoe Ridge to Orchard Glen trail
- North Ridge to Coal Creek Park
- Air Park to Coal Creek Trail
- Coal Miner/Linear Park to future Library/Recreation/Senior Center
- Sun West to future Library/Recreation/Senior Center
- Union Pacific Rail Line from Creek Side west to Highway 287
- Alternatively, the East Boulder Ditch from Coal Creek west to Highway 287/ Union Pacific Rail Line
- Union Pacific Rail Line from Coal Creek Park east to Interstate 25 (St. Vrain Legacy Trail System)
- Kenosha Gravel Pits to the St. Vrain River along Boulder Creek (St. Vrain Legacy Trail System)

Second tier trail priorities were formulated on the basis:

- That reasonable means to connect with schools, community services, commercial centers are currently in place, and once first tier trails are in place, second tier connections can be more easily facilitated. A second tier designation does not minimize the importance of these trail connections for Erie residents not immediately served by First Tier trails.

As noted above, OSTAB would like to bring to the attention of the Board of Trustees and Town Staff trail projects that are currently under consideration by neighboring towns or other entities:

- St. Vrain Legacy trail along St. Vrain River, Boulder Creek and Coal Creek
- St. Vrain Legacy trail from Old Town to Interstate 25 via the new Erie High School
- Boulder County regional trail to Erie via Coal Creek
- Boulder County regional to Erie via Boulder Creek or Union Pacific Rail line.

Other considerations include:

- The possibility of establishing easements and/or maintenance agreements to use existing irrigation canal service roads and railroad rights of way as public trail amenities.
- Use of public funds should generally be limited to the development of trails on existing public lands and open space where there are no potential contributions from the development community. The development of trails that satisfy priorities and that can be provided by the development community should be encouraged whenever and where ever possible.
- Grant funding should be obtained to leverage existing funds to the maximum extent possible.
- Cost sharing and outside partnerships should be fostered.

## Revenue Projections

Open Space, Trails and Community Character Revenue and Expenditure Projections were provided by Town Staff as a result of the passage of Ballot Measure 2A, as shown in Table 3 below.

**TABLE 3**  
**Open Space and Trails Area Fund Revenue and Expenditures Projections 2005-2010**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Beginning Balance	-	443,500	924,300	1,437,200	1,983,900	2,566,200
<b>REVENUES</b>						
Property Taxes	438,000	473,000	496,700	521,500	547,600	575,00
Interest Income	5,500	7,800	16,200	25,200	34,700	44,900
Total Revenue	443,500	480,800	512,900	546,700	582,300	619,900
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures						
Ending Balance	443,500	924,300	1,437,200	1,983,900	2,566,200	3,186,100



- Property tax revenue is projected to increase by 8% from 2005 to 2006, and by 5% annually thereafter through 2010.
- Interest income is projected at 1.75% on the average balance for years in which fund balances are positive.

### Trail and Cost Projections

In order to get as many trail connections built as possible and establish an initial and usable network, OSTAB recommends that trails be 8' wide (minimum) and constructed of crusher fines to a depth of 8" (minimum). With exception, OSTAB recommends that regional and commuter trails be constructed with a hard surface material, a minimum of 8 feet wide, to accommodate higher speed and year round travel and have a 3-foot (minimum) width attached soft, crusher fine shoulder for walkers, joggers and equestrians. Current market material and labor costs for soft surface and hard surface trails are as follows:

Trail Type	Materials Only	Contracted (Materials and Labor)
Crusher Fines (8' wide x 8" deep)	\$3.00 LF	\$10.00 LF
Concrete Trail (8' wide x 4" deep with reinforced mesh)		\$23.00 LF
Concrete trail with soft surface		\$28 LF

\*\*These estimates are based on current market rates obtained from other local agencies but will vary depending on the exact scope of work, timing, total length of the trail, terrain, access, vegetation and other market variables

Using Town of Erie staff, equipment, in-kind service by local contractors, government sponsored youth and young adult work programs and volunteers versus contracted services will significantly reduce the unit costs and increase the quantity of trails that can be built with available funds. The acquisition of matching funds from various sources such as Great Outdoors Colorado would be prudent and exponentially increase the amount of trail facilities that could be built.

Assuming these trail corridors are available for construction and no other costs are necessary, approximately 43,550 linear feet of trail could be contracted for construction in 2005. If the Town sponsored several volunteer trail building projects, the first 6 and possibly all 7 of the proposed First Tier Trails could be

built in 2005. This amount of trail would likely be reduced once further analysis, overall feasibility, land acquisition/easements and other costs are factored in.



Please Note:

- The future development of the Schmidt property may facilitate the construction of the Kenosha Farms/Erie Village trail to Erie Elementary Trail without public funds or with cost sharing.
- Most of the proposed trails involve road crossings. In order to facilitate a safe crossing and minimize current expenditures, all existing and proposed crossing should be striped and signed for pedestrians. Eventually as road improvements are made, these at grade road crossing should be replaced with an under or over pass.

- **Conclusions**

OSTAB recognizes that guidance and cooperative discussion with the Trustees and Staff are extremely important and relevant to further development and implementation of these priorities, as well as all business set before OSTAB. Town staff has specific knowledge of zoning, current and future proposals, confidential agreements, and information that OSTAB does not have direct access to or knowledge of that may alter or affect the priority of the projects recommended. In this regard, OSTAB has the following questions and would like to arrange a work session with the Trustees and Staff to review and discuss the priorities identified as requested by Mayor Moore.

#### **Questions/Action Items for Town Staff**

1. Are trails through the new developments currently in the pipeline (i.e. Canyon Creek, Creek Side etc.)?
2. Can agreements be made with ditch companies to use service roads as trails/ trail easements?
3. Contact ditch companies to verify easement feasibility as well as liabilities.
4. Is it feasible for a trail to connect to the west (back) side of Erie Elementary/Erie Middle, thus eliminating pedestrian traffic on County Line Road? Who owns this property?
5. Is trail construction feasible along the Union Pacific rail line?
6. Who owns section of Coal Creek between sewer plant and whale property?
7. Would Tall Grass Developers fund a trail to the new high school prior to development of the land?

Overall feasibility can be determined once these questions have been discussed and other information needs are addressed. Trail connections can be reprioritized based on this information and an action plan developed. OSTAB would be glad to work with Town Staff and Trustees to further discuss and develop these proposals.

OSTAB recommends that Erie allocates as much of the available 2005 funding as possible towards the construction of the most feasible First Tier Trails. The

remaining 2005 funding should be allocated to securing rights or acquiring the open space lands necessary to complete the First Tier Trails. Once these trails are completed, OSTAB recommends that funding be shifted towards the acquisition of open space lands. An increased focus and priority on funding of open space acquisitions will allow for continued construction of the trails identified in this report and begin to better meet the broader needs of Erie's Open Space Program.

Thank you for consideration of the above recommendations. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Town of Erie Open Space Trails and Advisory Board:

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